

GREYHOUND CULTURE

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I'm sometimes chagrined at the dearth of knowledge and understanding that remains, even among the Greyhound's devoted public, as it concerns the unique canine culture from which greyhounds have emerged.

No doubt, this is partially the fault of people such as I, who have taken it upon ourselves to share with you, anecdotes and stories of our times and experiences, while living and working among purpose-bred greyhounds. We could do a better job of it.

Now, most of you are aware that young greyhound litters are ordinarily kept with their dams for a significantly longer period of time than are other puppies. Most greyhound brood females, the ones who give us the next generation of greyhounds, and sometimes the generation after that, are often selected to do so, in part because they have either proven to be good "mothers" to their puppies, or are from a bloodline of good mothers, or have the sort of temperament that a breeder wishes to see in a good mother.

Good greyhound mothers are teachers. They teach the young greyhounds all about pack etiquette, social graces, communication via signaling and body language, and how to behave like---well, like greyhounds. They encourage and monitor play and chasing, and they engage, supervise and comfort the puppies in times of play, disputes or upset.

By the time they are separated from their dams, young greyhounds are well schooled in the dynamics of pack behavior and social skills, and how to get along with one another, even with strange greyhounds. The language of these things is universal, and Greyhounds are more fluent in this language than perhaps any other collective of canines. Greyhounds do everything together. They eat, sleep, train, go outdoors, and race--together.

Togetherness is the cornerstone of Greyhound culture.

This education and background will serve them well when they go onto their careers as performing, racing greyhounds. There, they will be assumed into a large colony of their peers, where proper deportment, manners and the ability to interact, socialize, play, train and peacefully co-exist with many other greyhounds, is a pre-requisite to every single one's success and contentment.

Because of their pack-centric upbringing and culture, greyhounds are ordinarily perfectly happy, and superbly adjusted to life within the greyhound colony. Many strong bonds are formed between and among greyhounds, as well as with their human familiars, as they go about their various, hour-by-hour activities, in their busy, active, day-to-day lives as performing, competitive athletes.

Given the voluminous amounts of disinformation which exist on the internet, and in other media, concerning the lives, the nature, and the nurturing of these greyhounds, I suppose it is no surprise that many adopters feel that their greyhound has led a life devoid of happiness, fulfillment or contentment. For the vast majority of these dogs, nothing could be further from the truth,

This colonial, pack culture from which your greyhound has emerged, is hundreds of years old, and in many ways, it closely mimics the natural state of canines, left to their own devices. People often make

the mistake of thinking that what is a great value and high priority to them, or perhaps to an ordinary, common pet, is necessarily of great value and high-priority to a purely purpose-bred greyhound.

This is not often the case. What is of great value and high-priority to a greyhound, is being able to express themselves according to the mores of their culture, and the innate desire and need to partake of the chase.

Sometimes we encounter new adopters who are entirely exasperated, because their greyhound seems ambivalent or unresponsive to their attentions, and to the cornucopia of creature comforts and presents that may have been bestowed upon them.

It's not always easy to get across to these good people, the idea that their new greyhound was probably perfectly happy and content with his prior situation, and is unused to, and maybe a little intimidated about being a "lone wolf", absent the companionship, culture and security of the colony or pack.

The truth of the matter being, that greyhounds, within their own culture, easily find their bliss, station and comfort zone, doing precisely what they have been bred to do. They can and do get along perfectly well without an extravaganza of things we may value for ourselves. Perhaps wrongly assuming that a purpose-bred greyhound wasn't indelibly informed and nurtured by culture, or by having a purpose to fulfill--and that they are not still willing and longing to serve that purpose, and to express their unique cultural edification and values.